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27 October 2020

UCT student organisation helps youth in marginalised communities

Pantsula with a Purpose, a youth development non-profit organisation (NPO) that provides training and development programmes to youth in under-resourced communities has been tipped as a potential winner of the 2020 Entrepreneurship Intervarsity national final.

During the regional final in July, Pantsula with a Purpose conquered the existing business – social impact category. The competition aims to identify top student entrepreneurs at South Africa's public universities, showcase their businesses and attract investors to their enterprises.

The organisation aims to bridge the gap between high school and university, and its programmes equip the youth with the necessary skills they need to succeed "in the real world".

Said Moeketsi Mashibini, second year B-Com Financial Accounting student and founder of the organisation: "Pantsula with a Purpose is an organisation for the youth, created by the youth. We offer holistic skills development programmes to schools in the township. Our programmes focus on personal development, real-world readiness and the necessary exposure to tertiary institutions." This includes soft skills training and development, financial literacy, the importance of practising personal hygiene, and computer skills.

Growing up in Daveyton on Johannesburg's East Rand, Mashibini said that he was always aware of the disparities between learners from marginalised communities and those from more affluent suburbs in the city. But it was all laid bare when he arrived at the University of Cape Town (UCT).

We experienced first-hand what learners in poor communities are faced with. Coming to UCT was an eye opener. Suddenly the inequalities between the haves and have nots were right in front of our eyes," Mashibini said. "UCT exposed us to a completely different space that shaped the trajectory of our lives for the better and we want others to have the same experience."

The organisation operates in Langa and offers its services to a number of schools in the community. Mashibini together with his team, which includes his co-founders, Sitholile Sithole and Samkelisiwe Magudulela, 11 staff members and a group of volunteers, coach and mentor learners to help them maximise their potential. In the coming months, the NPO hopes to expand its services by growing its presence in other marginalised communities in Cape Town.

With an ethos of “Give a little, change a lot”, Mashibini said that Pantsula with a Purpose aims to make a lasting impact on the lives of the youth that they come into contact with.

In addition to its holistic development workshops, the organisation hosts career expos, assists matric learners with bursary applications and provides advice on which tertiary institutions learners should apply to base on their skills.

Unlike other organisations that offer similar services, Mashibini said that Pantsula with a Purpose doesn’t just focus on providing academically strong learners with the support they need to succeed. On the contrary: their focus is on all learners, regardless of their academic performance.

“We believe that everyone has their own purpose in life and with the right opportunities and guidance, we help to shape their future paths. Giving a little really can change a lot. We can’t help everyone, but those who we can help, we make sure that we leave our mark,” he said.

ENDS

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